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Dear Dr. Evans:

Item No. 160 in the Fabyan Collection, now in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress is Cave Beck's The Universal Character, etc., printed in London in 1657.

As you perhaps know, a few of my associates and I have been interested, for a number of years and as a purely leisure-time home project, in trying to make some sense of the so-called Voynich Manuscript, which contains cipher writings allegedly attributed to Roger Bacon. Having reached some tentative conclusions with respect to the basic nature of the cryptographic system underlying the writing in the Voynich MSS, I have been searching through the literature for certain types of systems suggested in the 16th and 17th Centuries as "universal languages." The Cave Beck book recently came to my attention and I would like very much to have a copy of it for detailed and careful study of its contents. It seems difficult and expensive to obtain the book, and in lieu of the book itself, a photostatic copy would do. But the personal expense of photostating it at the Library makes me hesitate. On the other hand, I could probably have the work done with our own facilities, if the book could be made available for just one day, and could make more than one copy for the use of my associates in the project.

In view of the fact that it was through my intercession that the Library acquired the Fabyan Collection, could you possibly make an exception to the Library's rules and let me borrow the book for the time and purpose indicated?

Assuring you of my appreciation of your kind consideration of my request and with cordial greetings, I am

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN
Chief, Technical Division

Dr. Luther H. Evans
Librarian of Congress
Washington, D. C.

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